

PRESS RELEASE: Qi Chonghuai (齐崇淮), Chinese journalist set for release from prison, is handed an additional eight years to serve

QI CHONGHUAI (齐崇淮), CHINESE JOURNALIST SET FOR RELEASE FROM PRISON, IS HANDED AN ADDITIONAL EIGHT YEARS TO SERVE

- FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE -

CHINESE URGENT ACTION WORKING GROUP / 人权卫士紧急救援协会, BEIJING, CHINA, JUNE 10, 2011 --- The Tengzhou city court, Shandong province, found Qi Chonghuai guilty on charges of 'blackmail and extortion' and 'fraud' at 3 pm June 9 and sentenced him to 12 years of imprisonment, with a deduction for the four (4) years already served. Qi was convicted on the same charge as he was first imprisoned on, and the points of prosecution were the same, which renders the verdict illegal according to Chinese law, adding yet another in a long line of violations of Chinese procedural law in the authorities persecution of Qi.

Police visited Qi at Zaozhuang prison, Shandong province, where he is being held, on April 27, and informed him that they would re-charge him to prevent him being able to leave the prison on June 25, when he was set for release. They visited for a second interrogation on May 4, without allowing Qi access to his legal counsel, in violation of law. After the case was forwarded to the Procuratorate they choose to not undertake any investigation, nor to interrogate Qi, both in violation of law, and forwarded the case and the bill of prosecution to the court the very same day. This was done to ensure that trial (and verdict) could be delivered before Qi's set June 25 release date. Qi's legal counsel had thus only 12 days to prepare his defense. Trial began morning of June 9, and after a one-hour recess verdict was delivered at 3 pm. No decision on appeal taken as of yet.

Qi was initially detained by Tengzhou city Police in Jinan city, 210 kilometers away, on June 25, 2007 after having an article published by Xinhua that exposed corruption in Tengzhou city, and was sentenced to four years of imprisonment on charges of 'extortion and blackmail' on May 13, 2008. Severe violations, including beatings, torture and two attempts on his life followed at Tengzhou prison until, due to international pressure, he was moved to Zaozhuang prison and given lighter work duties. Despite this improvement in mid-2009, he have been denied legal counsel, and his appointed counsel denied access several time, despite the presence of a valid 'power of attorney'.

The Chinese Urgent Action Working Group believes the attempt to keep Qi imprisoned is tied to the ever widening crackdown on all forms of dissent, and the current proceedings is yet another in a long line of violations of law and procedural regulations concerning Qi's case. The Chinese Urgent Action

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Working Group believes further international attention and pressure is needed to ensure that Qi's situation, who poses a threat only in the eyes of the local Tengzhou government, does not revert back to the extreme level of persecution he faced after first being imprisoned, with beating, torture and attempts on his life.

An Urgent Appeal to the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention is being prepared.

- END OF PRESS RELEASE -

Qi's wife Jiao Xia can be contact at 15253100193. Qi's legal counsel can be reached through the Chinese Urgent Action Working Group's email (see below).

Detailed information on Qi can be found in the 'Case File for Qi Chonghuai' on the Chinese Urgent Action Working Group's website (see below), or it can be emailed per request.

ABOUT THE CHINESE URGENT ACTION WORKING GROUP

The Chinese Urgent Action Working Group (人权卫士紧急救援协会) undertakes direct interventions on behalf of Human Rights defenders in distress through investigations, public and closed advocacy, communication and coordination with international institutions and organizations, and through providing legal aid and financial assistance. The group is located inside mainland China, and was formed as a response to increased persecution of Human Rights defenders during 2008 and 2009. The organization also regularly releases reports and background briefs on issues concerning Human Rights, and especially Human Rights defenders, in China.

关于人权卫士紧急救援协会

人权卫士紧急救援会从事的是代表置身于危难中的人权卫士而进行的研究调查，公共宣传，与国际机构和组织交流，提供法律援助等的直接干预。该组织位于中国大陆，其成立的初衷是对2008年北京奥运会的举办而造成的对维权者更多迫害的一个回应。该组织还定期就中国人权维护者的问题发布报告和背景简要。

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